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JURY TO PROBE BRIBE CHARGES

Freeing of Hoffa Aim, Claims Investigator

A special federal grand jury in Nashville, Tenn., has been ordered to probe charges that conspirators in three states offered bribes to witnesses in an attempt to free jailed Teamsters boss James R. Hoffa.

Among the witnesses allegedly offered bribes is Baton Rouge Teamster head Edward Grady Partin who has been the center of labor troubles in and around the state capitol.

The probe was ordered by U.S. Dist. Court Judges Frank Gray Jr. and William E. Miller as the result of testimony by Walter Sheridan, a former Justice Department investigator.

Sheridan, who was with the Justice Department when the late Robert F. Kennedy was attorney general, testified last month that efforts have been made to bribe Partin and Robert Vick, a former Nashville policeman.

Partin has said in the past that he had been offered $1 million to change his testimony which helped convict Hoffa.

Sheridan helped investigate the jury-tampering case which led to Hoffa's conviction in Chattanooga in 1964.

Sheridan gave his testimony during a hearing last month on a motion to overturn the 3½-year prison sentence of Z. T. Osborn Jr., Hoffa's lawyer, who was also convicted of jury tampering.

Osborn's plea for reversal, however, was not granted.

Sheridan told the court that since Hoffa's trial in 1962, concerted, intensive efforts to intimidate, bribe and corrupt government witnesses have been made and continue to this day.